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President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 47 (continued)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Half a century has passed since the United Nations was founded with the noble mission of maintaining world peace and security. However, the United Nations has not yet realized humanity's desire for a free, peaceful and new world, but has been confronted with a number of challenges.

Even after the end of the cold war, the world has been witnessing increased conflicts taking place in different parts of the world. Several years have passed since Member States began to discuss the issue of reforming the United Nations — which is partially responsible for the ongoing conflicts — to make it a democratic and fair Organization, but the discussion still fails to achieve the desired results.

Humanity is now expressing disappointment and uneasiness over its future. Today's reality demands that Member States, more than ever before, resolve urgently the issue of restructuring the Security Council, the issue

that constitutes a key to enhancing the role of the United Nations, which is responsible for the maintenance of peace and security.

During the past 50 years, great changes have taken place in the international arena, including a threefold increase in the membership of the United Nations. However, the Security Council continues to retain its outdated structure and to undertake its activities on the basis of the old thinking of the cold war era. This phenomenon has been impeding the progressive development of the United Nations for an excessively long period.

Recently the United Nations Member States have been showing an ever increasing enthusiasm for the restructuring of the Security Council. Accordingly, the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the restructuring of the Council have been taking place in a more detailed and active manner. This is a progressive and positive development indeed.

In the efforts to restructure the Security Council's great attention should be given to expanding the Council's membership to reflect the will and interests of the developing countries, in conformity with the present reality characterized by the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries. One of the key points in the expansion of the Security Council's membership is to accord priority to the developing countries and to apply the principle of equal regional distribution, giving due consideration to the number of countries in each region.



Since no agreement has been reached so far among Member States on the issue of the permanent membership of the Security Council, it is reasonable to achieve consensus first on an increase in the number of non-permanent members at this stage. In this connection, we propose that 11 seats be added to the non-permanent membership. This would increase the Council's membership to 26 seats, ensuring seven seats for Asia, Africa, and Eastern and Western Europe respectively, and five seats for the Latin America and Caribbean region.

A country like Japan, which has neither reflected in a sincere manner upon nor intended to liquidate its past crimes committed against other countries, is not entitled to become a permanent member of the Security Council.

Also important in the restructuring of the Security Council is to improve its working methods and procedures in order to ensure transparency and democracy in its work. The power and authority of the United Nations Security Council should be curtailed, while the General Assembly should be given more power, and open access should be available to all the work of the Council, including its informal consultations.

For a resolution adopted by the Security Council on behalf of the United Nations that calls for sanctions or the use of force against Member States to come into force, it would have to be approved by more than two thirds of the Member States in the General Assembly. The ban on immediate re-election of non-permanent members should be maintained, to enable all Member States to have an equal opportunity to become Security Council members and play a role of responsibility.

Another point is to abrogate the veto rights of the permanent members of the Security Council. The removal of the veto system would remove the major stumbling-block to the democratization of the United Nations and the elimination of the legacies of the cold war era that have encouraged hegemonistic and high-handed actions by a minority of big Powers. In this regard, we also give positive consideration, in the meantime, to the proposals put forward by some Member States to either limit or diminish the scope and use of the veto.

We should no longer allow ourselves to waste time with impracticable arguments about the restructuring of the Security Council, but take more effective and substantial steps aimed at reforming the United Nations into a democratic and fair Organization so that Member States can benefit therefrom.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains fully committed to playing an active role in enabling the United Nations to fulfil the noble mission enshrined in its Charter.

Mr. Blukis (Latvia): I will deliver a statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Latvia, Ambassador Baumanis, who is unable to be here at this time.

We are considering today the report of the Open-ended Working Group and the compendium prepared by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Group. The two documents constitute a very useful summary of the current status of the debate on the reform of the Security Council. The Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Essy, President of the forty-ninth session, and especially the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Breitenstein and Mr. Pibulsonggram, who is in the Chair today, deserve our deep gratitude for the compendium and for the competent, patient and untiring leadership of the Working Group under trying circumstances.

Although initiatives to reform the Security Council have a history that is as long as the history of the United Nations itself, the current intense effort to reform the Security Council is the result of the end of the cold war.

The items in the current package of Security Council reforms have been divided into two clusters. The first cluster contains all aspects of changing the size and composition of the Security Council, as well as the question of the veto. The second cluster covers the working methods of the Council, including the relationships of the Council with interested Member States and other United Nations organs. This statement is intended to contribute to the debate on some items in both clusters, beginning with the second.

Appropriately, some reforms of the working methods of the Security Council, including increased transparency, have been initiated and carried out by the Council itself, in particular its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters. Latvia believes that the movement towards greater transparency and improvement of working methods must continue in order to maintain, and perhaps even improve, the effectiveness of the Council.

With regard to the first cluster, it is the General Assembly that must agree on changes in the size and composition of the Security Council. At present, the only

preliminary agreement reached is that the Security Council has to be expanded. It appears that agreement on the composition of the Council, as well as on the right to veto, will require time.

The Member States have a collective responsibility to explore whether the current partial agreement could serve as a starting-point for reaching a consensus on a long-term, multi-stage procedure for expanding and changing the composition of the Security Council. It would be most essential for reaching consensus that during the first stage of the expansion procedure Member States would not need to make permanent and irreversible commitments on the two controversial issues — the composition of the Council and use of the veto.

The Security Council's expansion during the first stage would be modest. It would be a positive response to the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations since 1965. It would mean improved compliance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. A probable and, in Latvia's view, a desirable consequence of the improved compliance would be the strengthening of the global decision-making role of small States and developing countries.

Latvia intends to make a more detailed proposal to the Open-ended Working Group regarding the aforementioned procedure.

There are objective reasons why it might be appropriate to take a long-range view of reforms leading to an expanded Security Council, especially in regard to the controversial issues.

The first reason is historical. The essential characteristics of the composition of the Council, as well as the veto, reflect international security needs as they were perceived at the end of the Second World War. These perceptions foresaw a special role for the major Power victors. They did not take into account the possibility of the cold war, which began within a few years of the end of the Second World War. Yet it was during the cold war that the Council was tested and found useful.

This does not mean that at this point in time we can clearly see what kind of Council will be useful in a post-cold-war world. It is too early to foretell the shape of that world and therefore to make a determination for the long term of the composition of an effective Security Council and the possible uses of the veto.

A second reason is basic to the historical process. The world keeps changing, and the Security Council needs to adapt slowly and pragmatically to this changing world in order to remain effective. A long-term and flexible approach to Security Council reform is appropriate for a mature United Nations and in the interest of all Member States that have agreed on the need to maintain an effective Security Council.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation has consistently based its position on the view that the question of the expansion of the membership of the Security Council should be considered in the context of the general task of adapting the United Nations to contemporary realities.

Having demonstrated the effectiveness and viability of a genuinely universal and leading mechanism of multilateral cooperation, the United Nations is operating today in a new international context, which it would have been difficult for the founders of the Organization to imagine. Clearly, the membership of the Security Council, like that of the entire United Nations system, should reflect the far-reaching changes that have occurred in the world in the past half-century. This is not an end in itself, however, but a stage in the strengthening of the role and effectiveness of the Council, which under the Charter bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In recent years, the Security Council, for the first time in many decades has been carrying out this very difficult mission energetically and fruitfully. It has to its credit a number of successful United Nations peace-keeping operations and numerous important decisions aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the strengthening of stability and security in various regions of the world. Among the members of the Security Council there are relations of positive and resolute cooperation in the joint and constructive search for optimum solutions to complex world problems.

That is why we attach high priority to the consideration of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council in a business-like and constructive atmosphere, with an extremely thorough and expert review of the political, organizational and procedural aspects of this multifaceted problem. In the view of the present complex transitional developments in the international system, we

cannot allow any erosion or weakening of a mechanism that on the whole is successfully carrying out its functions.

In the opinion of the Russian Federation, the strengthening of the Security Council's effectiveness and its ability to respond speedily and effectively to new threats to international peace and security are essential, fundamental requirements for resolving the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Russia recognizes the need for a limited expansion of the membership of the Council — up to 20 members — which would make it possible to preserve its compact nature, which is important for its efficiency.

Taking into account the interests of all regions, it is important to be guided by the criteria of membership in the Security Council enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Under those criteria, due regards must be specially paid, in the first instance, to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical representation. Clearly, the present status of the permanent members of the Security Council, as regards the full, organic relationship between their rights and duties, must remain unchanged.

At the same time, we support the proposal by a number of States to remove the provision in paragraph 2 of Article 23 of the Charter of the United Nations that retiring members of the Council shall not be eligible for immediate re-election upon the completion of their term.

We recognize the real need for broad reliance by the Security Council on the views of all Member States of the United Nations in its decision-making process, and we think that greater use should be made of the possibilities offered by the Charter of the United Nations in this respect. It is noteworthy that a number of important steps have been taken by the Security Council itself in this direction in the Working Group on procedures and working methods of the Council. Substantive decisions have been taken there to enhance transparency in the Council. Working contacts have grown closer between Council members and troop-contributing countries in practical matters related to peace-keeping operations. The President of the Security Council has become more "accessible" to other Members of the United Nations, and there have been more frequent official meetings of the Security Council for an exchange of views on key issues, with the participation

of other Members of the United Nations. We believe that the useful efforts in this direction should be continued.

We remain convinced that in further refining the Security Council's methods and procedures we should proceed in stages and in a balanced manner, without hasty or precipitate decisions. All practical steps should be developed and implemented on the basis of consensus, and they should be introduced only after such innovations have been duly approved and accepted.

Russia gives high marks to the results of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In our opinion, proof of the progress made by the Working Group is the clear awareness by Member States of the complexity of this multifaceted problem, their understanding that there can be no solution without consensus and without a balance of interests and broad and constructive cooperation.

We support the detailed and thorough report of the Working Group, which provides a solid basis for the further quest for agreement. We are very grateful to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Finland and the Permanent Representative of Thailand, and to the latter's predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, for their very active and productive contribution to our common interests.

The delegation of the Russian Federation intends in the future to continue fully to promote practical progress in the work of the Working Group, in the context of its mandate.

Mr. Matiko (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to express our appreciation to the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, Ambassador Essy, as well as to its two Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand, for the Working Group's well-balanced report. We are pleased to note that, so far, the report has guided us well and facilitated our deliberations on the subject at hand.

A broad consensus now exists in this Assembly on the need to reform and revitalize the Security Council. That, to us, is a step forward. There is broad consensus

on the need to expand the membership of the Security Council on the basis of, *inter alia*, equitable geographical distribution. What we need to do now is deliberate on the modalities of how we are going to enlarge the composition of the Security Council so as to achieve more equitable representation and on the extent to which the Security Council can be democratized without sacrificing efficiency and equality. My delegation is strongly convinced today, as it was in the past, that increasing the size of the Council is one of the most obvious ways of ensuring that more of the membership of the United Nations is equitably represented in the Security Council. The process, however, should not end there. Increased membership should go hand in hand with the increased representation of interests, especially of those countries which hitherto have not been well represented in the Council. In this connection, my delegation reiterates the need for developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean to be adequately represented in the Council.

The Charter confers on the Security Council the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is clear that in fulfilling its mandate, the Security Council acts on behalf of Member States of the United Nations. It follows, therefore, that decisions of the Security Council are binding on all Member States. However, over the years, it has become increasingly clear that the Security Council seldom pays attention to the views of Member States outside the Council; nor are their views adequately taken into consideration when the Council deliberates on important matters. The upshot of this is that important decisions are being taken by a few permanent members, thus alienating the majority of the Member States that are outside the Council. We therefore call for more transparency in the way the Council conducts its work. As my delegation stated in the Assembly last month, during the general debate, there must be a regularized system of reporting to, and consultation with, the General Assembly so as to give the wider United Nations membership a sense of participation in the work of the Council.

While we call for increased membership in the Security Council, we do not support veto power. My delegation has always been opposed to it. In our opinion, the maintenance of veto power is contrary to the spirit of democratization, which we think must inspire the new era of our Organization. The veto power is a relic of the past and has outlived its usefulness. It should therefore be abolished, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, which advocates the sovereign equality of all Member States, large or small, wealthy or economically

challenged. The United Nations exists for all humankind, and this needs to be reflected in all the organs of the Organization, especially the Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our support for the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which advocates the reform and expansion of the Security Council being considered as an integral part of a common package, taking into account the principle of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization.

Mr. Huaraka (Namibia): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made from this rostrum on this item by the Ambassador of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" has been under consideration since 1993. During the forty-ninth session, the Open-ended Working Group on the matter, chaired by the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, who was assisted effectively by the two Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand, held numerous meetings in which the issue was extensively debated. But despite all that, no common position could be reached. It must be acknowledged that the deliberations have been serious and frank, for this is a question of deep concern to all States Members of the United Nations, big and small, developed and developing, because the reform of the Security Council will determine the credibility, universality and legitimacy of our Organization.

The issue at hand, as my delegation sees it, is not about merely accommodating one or two States, but about transforming the Council. The Security Council cannot be fossilized in the vision and concepts of 1945. It must acquire a vision and focus for the twenty-first century. The geopolitical situation of 1945 is totally different from that of our times. The concept of colonies, prevalent and accepted then, has been totally rejected, and almost all former colonies are now sovereign States and Members of the United Nations. Military blocs are no longer central to national security and defence. The demise of the cold war and the globalization of the world have rendered security based on military blocs and alliances no longer acceptable.

In 1945 the founders of the United Nations perceived international peace and security from the

menacing viewpoint of the Second World War, when Nazism, fascism and totalitarian autocratic nationalism had wreaked havoc on their peace and security, as well as their perception of the world. As a result, they gave us a United Nations that was based on military alliance and trusteeship for Non-Self-Governing Territories and peoples. Needless to say, that is not the geopolitical situation of 1995. Ours is centred on world trade, economic groupings, protection of the environment, the safeguarding of the common heritage of mankind and the eradication of poverty and diseases. These are the realities and concerns of our time.

Reform and restructuring of the Security Council and, for that matter, of the United Nations as a whole must transform the vision, the philosophy and the focus of the Council. Thus, military power should not be the sole criterion for international authority, as was the case in 1945. Means of protecting the environment — the common heritage of mankind — are equally important. It is therefore the view of the Namibian delegation that what is needed is a thorough review of the Council.

It is obvious that the Security Council, as constituted in 1995, is totally unrepresentative of the States Members of the Organization and is thus undemocratic. And decisions made by an undemocratic organ lack legitimacy.

Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are unrepresented in the permanent membership of the Council, and Asia is underrepresented, whereas Western Europe and other areas are overrepresented. Reform must redress this unacceptable imbalance.

Namibia has repeatedly stated that the veto power is a completely obsolete concept, which should be done away with. As we have stated, the conceptual basis for the veto is no longer relevant.

My delegation hopes that the ongoing consideration of this question in the Open-ended Working Group during the fiftieth session will not be narrowly focused. And it must be emphasized that equitable geographic representation, transparency, accountability, democratization and the sovereign equality of States are principles which remain central to reform and restructuring of the Security Council.

Only by putting these principles into practice can we create an organ that will take the international community into the next millennium.

Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia): I should like, first, to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, President of

the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session and Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, on their excellent leadership and on their concise and comprehensive report and observations.

We are especially delighted to note that, with the active participation and increased interest of Member States, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has now acquired its well-deserved significance. We hope that the consideration and debate at the current session will not only throw further light on the subject but also result in practical steps that will clearly advance the process of reforming and expanding the Council, especially in a manner that truly reflects equitable representation and enhances the legitimacy of its decisions.

While it is not necessary to reiterate here my delegation's position and arguments concerning the need for and urgency of reform and revitalization of the Security Council, it is none the less useful to mention — if only for the sake of emphasis — several of these viewpoints.

Reform is important if the Council is to retain its credibility and legitimacy as the United Nations organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. It would also be in conformity with the democratization process that the international community yearns to see manifested in the United Nations — a process ensuring broad participation by all its members in the activities of the Council.

More important, expansion of the Security Council would ensure that no indignation was harboured by Member States on grounds of real or perceived exclusion from the affairs of the Council. After all, as article 24 of the Charter says,

“the Security Council acts on their behalf”.

But it does so only when it discharges its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of the Charter.

My delegation has carefully studied the various submissions of Member States. We are delighted that the subject has given rise to many and varied perceptions, interpretations and orientations. However, running through the various arguments is recognition of the urgent need for expansion and reform of the Council. As to how to achieve this, the international community agreed to disagree and decided that the discussions should be continued, with renewed vigour and determination — not repeating past positions and arguments, because there is nothing to be gained from such repetition, but trying to come up with new understanding and vision. In the meantime, however, the Security Council should aim at greater transparency and accountability.

We should therefore seize the momentum and take advantage of the international support for change and reform of the Council. It is evidently important that the Council be increased in size to reflect both the geographical and the demographic configuration of our world, as well as the economic and political realities. Basically, the principles of reform and change in the Security Council must reflect global demands and expectations for inclusiveness and democracy. In other words, the reform process must be holistic in conception and in execution. Any reform of the Council which merely fulfils the aspirations of some and leaves others in suspension risks creating additional difficulties of credibility and transparency.

In our delegation's view, reform and restructuring of the Security Council is not only concerned with expansion of its membership but is also linked with the whole set of other questions and measures that could be taken to strengthen and revitalize it, especially in the face of changing global realities. In this connection, while the measures undertaken by the Council to make its work transparent are commendable, much remains to be done to address the question of transparency in a fundamental way. It is therefore anticipated that any measures undertaken to reform the Council should include those that would enable Member States to make contributions in respect of vital issues under consideration when the Council is taking decisions on matters affecting them.

An expanded Security Council should act decisively and in a timely fashion. However, one should not necessarily equate efficiency with smaller numbers. Efficiency results from all actors cooperating fully and sharing responsibilities, as appropriate, to achieve a specific objective. This essentially involves enhancing the trust and confidence of the Member States in the Council.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is prepared to discuss any proposal on criteria for new members, though we maintain that a key criterion for new membership should be equitable geographical representation. This is one of the most basic democratic criteria for membership of any organ of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

In this connection, as a representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, I would like to point out that Africa will continue dialogue with the rest of the international community to explore all viable options and the most effective and acceptable way of reforming the Security Council so that democratization, transparency and efficiency are enhanced as it deals with international peace and security. In working towards the fulfilment of the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, Africa, along with the rest of the international community, will make relentless efforts with renewed vigour and determination to make the Security Council a genuinely global entity. The complexity of global security problems and the need to respond in time and effectively are more compelling today than ever before. Africans will act with others to respond to these challenges in the belief that collective security is more than just the absence of war.

We believe that any increase in the membership of the Security Council should also be accompanied by the greater involvement and participation of non-members in the Council's decision-making process through improved coordination and consultation on international peace and security matters between the Council and the General Assembly. This would lead to greater balance in the work of these bodies on international peace and security issues.

All United Nations Member States should engage in the discussion of this issue with a certain degree of broad-mindedness, a spirit of compromise and a willingness to work towards consensus. Whilst each Member State has to protect its national interests, this approach needs to include an appreciation of the broader interests of the global community as a whole. In an era when most things are dealt with from the vantage point of national interest, moral and ethical forces should not be forgotten. Important as national interest might be, universal principles should be upheld. To insist inflexibly on discussing only some issues and not others is a sure recipe for paralysis.

In our view, the discussions must necessarily examine an increase in membership as well as other

matters related to the Security Council, such as those pertaining to its procedures and working methods and its relationship with other organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly. The relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council is one of the most important areas clearly requiring improvement.

The active role and participation of the General Assembly, as the most representative organ of the United Nations with almost universal membership, in matters relating to international peace and security are indispensable. To ensure that participation and active role, it is essential to enhance cooperation, consultation and coordination between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We believe that this objective could be achieved if the Security Council were to adopt certain procedural and institutional mechanisms whereby the potential, mandate and comparative advantage of the General Assembly could be fully explored and utilized, even if this should require a revision of the Charter in some cases.

Cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations is, indeed, one of the most important issues that this reform of the Council is expected to address appropriately. The experience gained over the past few years clearly indicates that regional and subregional arrangements could serve as reliable partners and play an effective role in the maintenance of international peace and security, which includes peace-keeping, peacemaking, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict confidence-building mechanisms.

Taking into account the specific mandate and characteristics of each regional or subregional organization, the method of work and procedures relating to cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations should be improved to enhance greater coordination, consultation and genuine partnership.

The year 1995, during which the United Nations is commemorating its fiftieth anniversary, would appear to have a special significance. It does not take very long to determine that an idea is good and worthy of implementation if there is the necessary political will or disposition. Now, at 50, our Organization is an institution mature enough to make wise decisions with positive and far-reaching impact. The United Nations, at its fiftieth anniversary, cannot afford to be an institution that runs short of the wisdom, political will and commitment necessary to revitalize and strengthen itself. We must deliver on the expectations of the overwhelming majority of States Members of our Organization. Now is the time to

begin, with a determination to succeed in the worthwhile endeavour of making our planet a peaceful place for everyone.

Mrs. Hoang Thi Cu (Viet Nam): I am very happy to see you, Sir, guiding the deliberations on this important agenda item, "Question of equitable representation on and the increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I wish to thank the Chairman and especially the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group for their outstanding contributions to the work of the Working Group at the forty-ninth session.

Viet Nam is of the view that, given the speed and scope of the changes taking place in the world, it is imperative that the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular be reformed. Our position in this regard was set out in the statement made by our President, Mr. Le Duc Anh, at the Special Commemorative Meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations:

"In order to discharge its mission successfully, the United Nations itself should be revitalized. First and foremost, it should be turned into a democratic organization in which relations among Member States as well as between the United Nations and each Member State are based on democracy and equality." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 37th meeting, p. 16*)

Our delegation fully associates itself with the statement made in the debate on this item by the Permanent Representative of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Here I wish to reiterate some points that are of great interest to us.

The reform and expansion of the Security Council should be considered as integral parts of a single package. To attain a solution to these issues, we should take into account the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographic distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the working methods of the Security Council, including in its decision-making process.

We support the proposals submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement to the Working Group on Security Council reform. The question of the expansion of the Security Council should be addressed in a comprehensive

way in order to improve the Council's credibility and thus reflect the universal character of the world Organization. We share the view expressed by many non-aligned and developing countries that it is essential to duly increase the proportion of Security Council members that belong to the Movement or that are developing countries. Any attempt to exclude non-aligned and developing countries from an expansion in the membership of the Security Council would be unacceptable. Any enlargement of the Security Council should be focused on correcting existing imbalances in the Council's present composition and on reflecting the universal character of the world Organization.

On the criteria for selecting new permanent members, we deem it necessary to take into account a number of elements such as contributions to the United Nations system, population size, potential for a regional and global role and so forth.

We support the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group contained in document A/49/47. Our delegation assures the Assembly that it will participate actively in the work of the Working Group during this session.

Mr. Agathocleous (Cyprus): The Cyprus delegation believes that the item under consideration, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", should be seen not in isolation, but within the context of the overall reform of the United Nations with the purpose of strengthening our Organization to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The drafters of the San Francisco Charter were inspired not only by idealism but also by pragmatism in their endeavour to create a world that would be spared from further international conflicts and wars. In general it can be said that the principles of the Charter have stood the test of time. Their application, however, leaves much to be desired, as these principles have not always been universally adhered to or applied.

Since San Francisco, the world has been transformed. Cyprus stands for a strong, democratic and effective United Nations. We want to see its purposes, principles and edicts fully respected by all. That is why the United Nations Charter forms the backbone of our foreign policy and the beacon of our international endeavours.

The credibility of the United Nations will continue in the future to be judged to a large extent by the

Organization's role in the maintenance of international peace and security, a matter for which the Security Council has primary responsibility. Through the concept of collective security and the effective use of existing provisions of the Charter, especially those of Chapter VI and Chapter VII, the United Nations can, and must, meet the mandate of mankind. But in this respect there is an urgent need for the full utilization of these provisions and for the strengthening and restructuring of the Security Council and the reform of its working methods. For never in the history of mankind have so many demands been made upon the United Nations and the Security Council. The Security Council no longer reflects the size and composition of the United Nations membership, which has increased from 51 Members in 1945 to 185 today.

We therefore support enlargement of both the permanent and the non-permanent membership of the Security Council in order to respond to today's realities. The expansion must be broad enough to be representative of the present membership; it must also be balanced, based on equitable geographic criteria and most important, in accord with the criteria set out in Article 23 of the Charter.

As to working methods, the views of the general membership, as expressed through resolutions of the General Assembly, should be carefully taken into consideration by the Security Council, which acts, after all, on their behalf. We are encouraged by recent initiatives taken by the Security Council towards transparency and consultation with non-members of the Council. This process should be further strengthened and formalized to achieve full democratization.

Enlargement of the Security Council alone will not suffice. It must be accompanied by other necessary changes and reforms in order to enhance the Council's legitimacy and credibility and, more important, its effectiveness, as well as that of the United Nations in general. The issue of credibility is of cardinal importance. Without this credibility, all contemplated changes aimed at the strengthening of the Security Council will prove to be of no avail. The objective application of United Nations principles, without discrimination, is a *sine qua non*. We must remember that failure to uphold principles and international law in one situation sets a precedent for similar failure elsewhere, with often catastrophic consequences. My delegation has in the past suggested that adequate mechanisms and procedures should be set up to ensure

compliance with mandatory Security Council decisions. This need is more evident now when we are reviewing the reform of the United Nations in general and of the Security Council in particular.

There are two additional issues that should be mentioned here. Within the context of recent discussions concerning the reform of the Security Council, justifiable concerns have been expressed regarding the use of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council, an issue that must be addressed seriously with a view to at least minimizing the use of the veto for the time being. The other is the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Council's future ability and effectiveness in addressing, containing and resolving conflict situations depend to a great extent on close cooperation with the General Assembly and on the consolidation of closer regional arrangements, acting in conformity with the United Nations Charter and with the full authorization of the Security Council.

The General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council has addressed all these issues diligently. Its meetings have been attended by an ever-increasing number of States, a clear sign that the work done has been substantial and relevant.

We must not be disheartened by the fact that, after so many meetings over a period of months, it was not possible for the Working Group to reach a consensus on all issues and that agreement on a formula for enlargement proved elusive. On the contrary, we must continue the deliberations diligently, purposefully and with perseverance. We must address all the issues, and consider all available suggestions and proposals — and there are many innovative, constructive and interesting ones already on the table — with a view to reaching appropriate and lasting solutions. For that to happen, we must seek and reach general agreement and consensus. In order to be effective, all changes must be seen by all to be rational, fair and democratic.

I would like to express deep appreciation to the Chairman, Mr. Amara Essy, and the two Vice-Chairmen of the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council for the work they carried out. Their leadership and guidance of the Group's work was exemplary.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, above all, as I mentioned earlier, my delegation believes that reform of the Security Council and a change in its composition will be to no avail if we are not clear as to the proper functioning of the Security Council and other, related organs of the United Nations and their interrelationships; if we do not have adequate machinery for the implementation of decisions made by the Security Council; if we do not have an adequate and acceptable system of peace-keeping; if we do not use improved methods of peace-making and pacific settlement of disputes; and if we do not provide the United Nations with a solid financial basis to carry out all these functions.

In other words, we must bestow on future generations a reformed, rejuvenated and invigorated United Nations that is effective — one that they will be proud of and one whose performance will not periodically be called into question. If we fail this test and miss this opportunity, history will judge us harshly.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, allow me to join in extending appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Amara Essy, Chairman of the Open-ended Working group, and President of the forty-ninth General Assembly session, and to the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein, Permanent Representative of Finland, and Ambassador Pibulsonggram, Permanent Representative of Thailand, for their tireless efforts and substantial contribution to the work of the Open-ended Working Group.

At all stages of consideration of the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase of the Membership of the Security Council, the delegation of the Republic of Belarus has proceeded from the need to resolve this issue in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and it has sought to contribute constructively to this process.

The problem of reforming the Security Council, for the purpose of adapting one of the main bodies of the United Nations to the changing circumstances and enhancing its efficiency, has become a priority issue for Member States during the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This subject provides a background for the effort to increase the benefits and improve the mechanism of the United Nations system as a whole.

In this context, the Republic of Belarus supports the efforts of countries which are seeking mutually acceptable approaches and a wider and more lasting consensus on the reorganization and review of the membership of the Security Council, one that is capable of ensuring international security and peace in all regions and thus promoting the aims of sustainable development.

The consideration of this issue in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group has revealed alternative approaches by delegations regarding the Security Council's membership; an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members; the principles, criteria and mechanism for their selection; the voting procedure — including the veto power; and the need to take measures and to adopt practices which would enhance the transparency and working methods of the Security Council.

Speaking from this rostrum, the delegation of Belarus would like to present its position in the context of the development of the negotiating process.

Our approach to a possible resolution of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council related matters is based upon the following elements: The important changes which have taken place in international relations, including a substantial increase in the number of United Nations Member States, presuppose the need to make the Security Council a more effective and larger organ. The enlargement of the Security Council should proceed with respect both to permanent and to non-permanent members. The expansion of the Security Council should be based upon the principle of equitable geographical distribution of States, elected by secret ballot by the General Assembly within the framework of the agreed distribution pattern among regional groups. New permanent members, as well as the five original permanent members, must bear a special political and financial responsibility — not only for maintaining international peace and security, but also for achieving the purposes of sustainable social and economic development. Any increase in the permanent membership should not affect chances for other States to be elected to the Security Council as non-permanent members. In the enlargement of the Council we should envisage the allocation of an additional non-permanent seat for each of the existing regional groups, including the Group of Eastern European States. Nomination for non-permanent seats by regional groups should be based upon interregional rotation and equitable geographical distribution. The two categories of Security Council members, as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, should be preserved. The veto

power should not be extended to new permanent members; the veto power and other voting procedures of the Council should be given thorough consideration. Lastly, the reform of the Security Council should promote a better relationship between the Members of the Council and other United Nations Member States, and enhance transparency and efficiency in the Council's working methods, including democratization of its proceedings.

Regarding further activities of the Open-ended Working group at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, our delegation supports the proposals contained in document A/49/965 concerning the next stage of the negotiating process, with the aim of achieving tangible results at this session.

We should preserve the framework of negotiations adopted at the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions, which provides for alternating official meetings of the Open-ended Working Group with open-ended unofficial consultations.

In conclusion, may I once again assure members of our delegation's readiness to make further contributions towards consolidating the consensus and seeking mutually acceptable solutions in order to create an effective and democratic Security Council.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): There is general agreement that the present membership of the Security Council should be enlarged to reflect the cultural diversity represented by the increase in the membership of the United Nations from 51 States in 1945 to 185 States today. What seems to present the most difficult proposition is the criteria for the inclusion of new members — which countries should become permanent members of the Security Council and if they should also have the veto power, whether permanent seats should be allocated on a regional and rotational basis or should be allocated to certain specified regional representatives, and how democratic and transparent the Security Council should be.

Another question is: by how much should the membership of the Security Council be increased in both categories? The answer to this particular question must of course take account of the fact that we have to be very careful not to expand the membership of the Council to the extent that it becomes a useless monstrosity unable to take decisions in a timely manner, if at all.

These are vexing questions which call for creative and immediate responses lest question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters remain a permanent feature on the agenda of the General Assembly. These questions also indicate that there is need for change in the way the Security Council functions. In attempting to address these questions, my delegation does not intend to depart or detract from the positions taken by the African Group or the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries. As a member of both Organizations we are bound by the decisions they have taken. We wish, however, to address a few issues of a general nature as our contribution to the ongoing debate on this agenda item.

The original mission of the Security Council, or the United Nations itself for that matter, was very simple: to prevent war or threats to the peace through persuasion, sanctions and collective military action when this became absolutely necessary. This was a good idea for the collective security of all nations, but it fell afoul of the national interests of the victorious Powers. They arrogated to themselves extraordinary powers which have ensured their dominance of international affairs for the last 50 years. But dominance is incompatible with democratic principles.

The reduction and the ultimate elimination of the privileges enjoyed by some States should be the starting point in any debate on Security Council reform. This may sound like an unrealistic proposition but we do not believe that the addition of new permanent members would make the Security Council more democratic than it is today. On the contrary, we would merely have increased the number of privileged Members of the United Nations and we would not have made the Security Council just or democratic. A truly democratic Security Council will come about when the principle of sovereign equality is fully established and respected in that body.

The division of the Security Council into permanent and non-permanent members makes horse trading a difficult and, at times, a frustrating process. Very often the non-permanent members find themselves adopting resolutions and decisions they did not quite fully participate in making. While it is appreciated that an attempt is made to reach decisions by consensus, the outcome is more often than not a foregone conclusion. Anyone can guess the outcome of a game of cards in which one side has all the aces. We believe that in the past the power of the veto was abused to protect the interests of the permanent members at the expense of the interests of the general membership

of the United Nations and of the international community at large. This abuse paralysed the Security Council during the cold war years, to such an extent that the Council literally ceased to discharge its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security.

And there is more. Permanent membership in the Security Council does not only give those members the privilege of the use of the power of veto: permanent members of the Security Council also tend to become permanent members of the United Nations agencies and programmes and other bodies of the Organization. Some of them have served in these bodies of the United Nations continuously since they were established. This defeats the principles both of democracy and of rotation and gives the permanent members of the Security Council an undue advantage over the rest of the membership of the United Nations.

It is clear that the authors of the United Nations Charter never meant to make the Security Council a democratic organ — that we concede. The appointment of the five Powers as veto Powers and permanent members of the Security Council, and the privileged position they enjoy in the Council, attest to this fact. Therefore, increasing the number of the permanent seats by whatever percentage would not make the Security Council democratic. I do not know why we talk so much about democratizing the Security Council by adding more permanent members — which means more privileged members of that body. Any reform process that does not address the privileges enjoyed by the few Members of the United Nations or which seeks to perpetuate the status quo, or even enhance it or maybe make it worse, would be unacceptable to the majority of the membership of the Organization, which includes my own country, Botswana.

As for transparency in the working of the Council, we insist on it and always have. Those who are elected to the Council are not elected to go into hiding, making decisions which bind all of us behind closed doors. Yes, there is a place in the workings of the Council for informal consultations behind closed doors, but these must as often as possible culminate in meetings in which non-members can have the opportunity to participate.

Despite what I have said, Botswana supports the labours of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We believe the Working Group is doing a very important job which

should not be rushed unnecessarily. The Working Group needs time to come up with the desired solutions to questions relating to Security Council reform, solutions that, hopefully, would make the Security Council a democratic organ of the United Nations — that is, if that is possible.

Mr. Nsanze Terence (Burundi) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation is pleased to commend the trio that has presided over the Working Group: namely the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire and the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand.

Our statement is based on two points — first, the genesis of the one-sided system within the Security Council, and, secondly, the need to synchronize democratization at the global and national levels. The best way to cure a disease is first to diagnose it, and the best approach to resolving problems is first to identify them. In accordance with this dual principle, my delegation will briefly refer to the genesis of the unequal — indeed, one-sided — system established within the Security Council.

Based on the fortunes of war, the major Allied Powers — the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom — consulted each other periodically on the political and military mechanisms to be decreed after the Second World War. Milestones towards a new international world order were successively put in place by conferences of the major Powers — in Tehran in December 1943, in Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, in the summer of 1944, in Yalta in February 1945, and in Potsdam later that same year, culminating at the conference establishing the United Nations, held in San Francisco in June 1945. During that period of reshaping geopolitics, the marginalization of the central Axis Powers in the international political arena was the priority objective, along with its equally important corollary: the monopolization of hegemony by the victorious Powers, which generously shared spheres of influence.

To safeguard this supremacy, these craftsmen had to forge an ad hoc instrument in the form of a veto, incorporated in Article 27 of the United Nations Charter, as the exclusive preserve of five States, by virtue of Article 23 of that same multilateral Treaty. The time when hegemonist motives prevailed is over. The lion's share that the five major Powers gave themselves, thus reducing the portion for the other States of the world, is out of place in today's world.

I now come to the second point: synchronization of democratization at the national and international levels. Urgent appeals and even exhortations have poured in from all quarters for the democratization of national institutions. Paradoxically, the enthusiasm of international circles for the establishment of democratic regimes in States contrasts strangely with their resistance, if not their allergy, to the democratization of the Security Council in particular and the world system in general. The Government of Burundi believes it would be better for the United Nations to emulate, through democratic reforms, the democratization of its individual Member States. Ideally, nations would be called upon to jump on the bandwagon of democratization within the United Nations. If the Organization cannot take the lead, it should at least determine to synchronize the democratization of its structure, functioning and methods with the wave of social and political changes that is sweeping through human society.

There are different, if not diametrically opposed, ideas about the projected reforms, which are contested by various parties. The delegation of Burundi will look at the four trends that have polarized opinion and then comment on each.

The following steps have been proposed: the simultaneous accession of Germany and Japan and three States from three geographic regions to the status of permanent members of the Security Council, a permanent seat being based on certain criteria, such as demographic weight, contribution to the United Nations system and support for and participation in peace-keeping — in brief, a possible regional and global role; maintenance of the status quo for the five permanent members, coupled with rotation for the others; and, lastly, equal treatment for all Member States in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

The Government of Burundi welcomes the happy fact that two States penalized in the wake of a world conflagration attributable to them are today being supported by those responsible for their fate then. Because of their fruitful cooperation with my country, and because they meet all the requirements for joining the club of permanent members of the Security Council, Germany and Japan may rely on Burundi's support.

But my delegation must in turn be able to rely on the opposition of Bonn and Tokyo to any kind of selective reform that could worsen the existing imbalance, rather than do away with it, thus jeopardizing

the trend towards adapting the Security Council to the requirements and challenges of today's world and risking regression as regards its composition and operation.

A number of delegations praise criteria that would give them advantages, thus propelling them towards a permanent seat on the Security Council, criteria such as population, material and financial contributions and military contingents. Such criteria not being immutable, meeting them is subject to change. For example, a rising birth rate and its opposite, a declining birth rate, may invert the proportions, and contributions in the areas I have mentioned vary, because they depend on political will and economic causes and conditions.

Through a process of elimination we find that of certain theses advocated here one is fully in accord with the main thrust of the United Nations Charter in particular and with international law in general. By virtue of the sacrosanct principle of "sovereign equality", established and enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter, the prerogatives attached to a permanent seat should be exercised in their entirety by States members of the Security Council, whether members through rotation or permanent members.

*Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic),
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

It seems reasonable to us that, by relying on the legal standards enshrined in the Charter, which are invoked almost universally by the advocates of equitable representation in the Security Council, the Assembly could be spared unnecessary patch-up jobs, quick fixes and prognostications. In this context, a pragmatic, realistic and egalitarian formula should be sought in the sum total of national sovereignties, merged into a collective, or continental, sovereignty. This approach would give a voice to each of the political families that make up the world Organization and to all the Member States, through their regional representatives. The Rubicon could be crossed by sacrificing subjective and egocentric schemes to three new and distinct phenomena: the collapse of ideological blocs; the near-universal membership of the United Nations; and the closing of this century and the dawning of the third millennium, which will be characterized by different stakes and considerations from those that have dominated the international arena over the last 50 years.

In view of the foregoing analysis, we propose that sovereign equality be established on a regional scale and that, accordingly, permanent seats be allocated to all the continents according to their respective characteristics.

Proceeding along these lines, it would remain to be decided whether there should be an equal number of permanent seats for all regions or whether the number should be determined on the basis of numerical inequalities. In this context, the question of the *raison d'être* of Europe's division into two separate regions would appear to be relevant, in the wake of the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the burying of the cold-war hatchet.

The merits and advantages of allocating permanent seats on a continental basis lie in the durability of such a procedure. Indeed, the criteria recommended by many delegations are variable, while continents are immutable. These variable criteria are subject to historical, human, demographic, political, economic, territorial and other changes.

An increase in the number of non-permanent seats is among the imperative changes to be effected within the Security Council. A dual balancing would thus take place: at the level of both the permanent and the non-permanent seats. The next step would be the distribution of new seats among the States of each geographical region. In any case, this practice has already been translated into fact within all the principal organs of the United Nations, and in particular within the Security Council itself.

In this scenario, the acquired rights of the five current permanent members would remain intact. Their cherished veto also would survive the restructuring of the Security Council. Nevertheless, the new permanent members also would have the right of veto, thus ending the monopoly of that right by its five current beneficiaries. Another, equally valid, option would be for all the permanent members to renounce recourse to the veto, or even the definitive abolition of that institution.

Reorganizing the Security Council in such a manner would not impinge in any way upon the common interests of Member States or on their adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The specific situation of Africa, more than that of any other continent, poses a challenge to the collective conscience of the international community. Indeed, the political configuration of the United Nations reveals a strange paradox: at a time when hotbeds of tension are concentrated in Africa, when poverty there is reaching record levels, and when natural and man-made disasters seem to be conspiring against that continent, which

accounts for the largest number of refugees and displaced persons, international efforts are being deployed to reduce Africa to the status of a poor relation. Indeed, as we commemorate our Organization's golden jubilee, Africa is the only one of the five continents to be excluded from permanent representation on the Security Council. But Africa, threatened by dangers both from within and without, must assume a central role in deliberations related to peace, security and social and economic well-being.

Certain parties with clearly stated or skilfully disguised positions are working to minimize Africa's weight in missions of peace and security. Their arguments are based on nuclear arsenals, conventional weapons, and the number of military divisions — to use the Stalinist notion. But such an oversimplification ignores the other factors that determine the victory and reign of peace.

By assigning to themselves the task of policing the world and taking the predominant role within the United Nations system, the five major Powers used as a pretext the decisive role they played, thanks to their respective armadas, in the second global conflagration. But the role of Africa, which, however anonymously, had a major presence on all the battlefields, was just as decisive. A number of salient facts provide indisputable proof that events could have taken a different turn if Africa had not had such a broad and multifaceted commitment to the crusade in the Second World War.

First, the bravery of the African army in the two world wars earned it high praise from one of the most prestigious military leaders in history, General de Gaulle, in one of his memoirs. African troops often were assembled on the front lines and in the vanguard in order to shield, and even ensure the survival of, the European contingents.

Secondly, the entire African continent became the breadbasket and the milk cow for feeding the armies, which were fighting simultaneously on a number of fronts.

Thirdly, Africa's crucial strategic role, both militarily and politically, was recognized throughout the world. Our continent was transformed into a huge base, in which the Allied armies were concentrated, particularly the American and French armies. It served as a springboard for the Normandy landing in June 1944, as a sanctuary and headquarters for the French Resistance, and as the starting-point for worldwide victory, beginning in Brazzaville, where General de Gaulle traced the new map of the Earth,

showing the contours of the new political panorama of France and its colonies.

The *coup de grâce* of the Second World War was delivered in the Far East by the atomic bomb, manufactured with uranium extracted in the heart of Africa, in the Congo — now Zaire — of which Burundi was at that time an integral part, from the administrative point of view.

Of course, we hasten to deplore the sad fact that this ore was used to bring such immeasurable tragedy to thousands of innocent victims.

In conclusion, it is clear from this brief historical outline that achievements in the search for peace and security are not the exclusive preserve of the economically developed or militarily over-armed States. Even when colonized Africa rivalled its former metropolises in the service of mankind. The Africa of today is all the more capable of participating through its permanent members in the Security Council in its Council's

"primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". (*Charter of the United Nations, Article 24*)

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The coming weeks will see the third anniversary of the work of the Open-ended Working Group. The delegation of Peru would like to stress the considerable progress achieved during this time, as we are convinced that, between the adoption of resolution 47/62 in 1992 and the second report before us today, noteworthy headway has been made on fundamental issues with regard to all the topics the Group has considered. This includes the fact that several initial reforms are now being implemented and continue to have a positive impact. I wish to emphasize our appreciation for the tirelessness, consistency and integrity of the work of the Vice-Chairmen. In this respect, the first report of the Working Group in 1994 and the solemn Declaration of 24 October indicate very clearly how far we have progressed and where we now stand.

This second report sets out the points on which there is some agreement among delegations to avoid excessive delays in negotiations and decisions. Thus, although it is true that a more in-depth consideration of the issues is needed because of the major differences that remain, we should not waste the opportunity afforded by the

momentum of the anniversary and the obvious general interest being shown in the future of the United Nations. In our opinion, the Working Group is at a turning point. An excessively lengthy debate, without decisions, could erode its credibility. We believe there is a need to ensure the thematic and organizational continuity in the Group.

The report before us objectively reflects the limitations and possibilities we face and also expresses a tenuous but stimulating optimism based on the progress it has been possible to make so far. We all recognize the urgent need to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the Council, to enhance its representativity, and to improve the efficiency and transparency of its methods of work. We also agree that the Council should be expanded and, at the same time, that we should continue reviewing its methods of work. These are the consensual foundations that have been laid. They are fitting because their basic thrust is the idea of the common good and not just direct and immediate national interest. They also contain the ideal of a genuinely representative, democratic and legitimate Security Council. However, we must also point out that, in our opinion, the strengthening of the Council will not come to pass solely through an expansion of its membership, but through the nature of the decisions it adopts in the future and the extent to which they comply strictly with the law rather than bow to particular national interests.

In our opinion, the level of agreement that has been achieved in the Group would make it possible to conclude the pre-negotiation phase and begin the process of working out the details. We believe that both the existing categories of members should be expanded and, in view of the global scope of their responsibilities and influence, we feel that Japan and Germany should become permanent members.

We are not sure of the most suitable number of members, but we believe that the present ratio between the two categories should be maintained. We believe that it is essential to ensure proper representation for developing countries in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter. In that regard, whether or not national policies are consistent with the principles and standards of the Charter should be taken into account. We firmly believe that alongside major financial contributions, we must give thought to the qualitative and significant contributions both developed and developing countries have made to promoting the purposes of the Charter and that have helped the Organization to make headway in areas ranging from the law of the sea to the environment and international cooperation for development.

We also believe that rotation agreements could be implemented at the regional level within the category of non-permanent members, to ensure the participation of all States in the Security Council. We welcome the idea of periodically reviewing these questions. We agree with the ultimate goal of eliminating the veto, but we recognize that agreement among the powers is essential. We believe that both questions are linked on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, on the topic of decision-making, we favour a gradual and progressive approach, and would be receptive to ways and means of limiting or qualifying use of the veto.

Allow me to extend our appreciation to those countries, whether or not they are candidates for a permanent seat on the Council that distinguished themselves in the past 50 years by their positive contribution to the United Nations.

Mr. Karim (Bangladesh): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in congratulating and paying tribute to the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Amara Essy, and his two colleagues in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand, on an excellent job in guiding the deliberations of the Working Group. We have every confidence that under the current President's leadership we will collectively be able to build upon the useful work done during the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly.

The Security Council is the executive arm of the United Nations and it is only natural that Member States should take the keenest interest in its restructuring and reform to make it more democratic and effective. Bangladesh's views on various aspects of the issue have been articulated on different occasions in the past. I will therefore be brief in my intervention.

The main object of our endeavour, as we see it, is to have a Council that is more attuned and responsive to present-day needs, realities and expectations. A consensual approach, in our view, is the best way to progress towards this goal. The reform aspect, which has been described as the soft option by some delegations, has already engendered a large measure of agreement. The need for closer interaction between the Council and the General Assembly, greater transparency and consultations with non-members, briefings by the

President of the Council and greater involvement of troop-contributing countries in the evolution of policy decisions has been recognized. Indeed, considerable progress has been made in these areas.

There is also clear consensus on the need to enlarge the Council to make it more representative of the present membership. This aspect is important because it is the Council's representativeness that gives its decisions legitimacy and force.

However, there are differences as to the exact size of increase to be achieved and — perhaps more acutely — on the nature or character of the expansion. One option is simply to expand the non-permanent category, as was done in the 1960s. Another suggestion is that the permanent ranks also should be added to. Yet another proposal would result in the creation of a separate category of semi-permanent seats, which, it is argued, would also afford more opportunities for smaller and medium-sized countries to serve as regular non-permanent members. It has also been suggested that the bar on the immediate re-election of non-permanent members be removed.

My delegation is prepared to look at all options with an open mind. Any step or measure conducive to a more effective and more efficient Council would have our support. There are two points, however, that I should like to stress. First, we expect that the concept of the sovereign equality of States will be a guiding principle in the reform and restructuring exercise. Secondly, it is the smaller and more vulnerable countries — a clear majority of Member States — that have the most vital stake in an effective Security Council and are most dependent on it. Their legitimate interests and perceptions should not be lost sight of.

Before concluding, I should like to make a brief comment about the veto. Reflecting, as it did, the military realities of 1945, the veto was designed as an essential safety-valve for the United Nations, to prevent confrontation between the Security Council's permanent members, which could destroy the Organization itself and could threaten international peace and security. It defined, in a sense, the limits of what the United Nations could do or could attempt to do. If its use stymied the United Nations during the cold war, it is arguable that it also ensured the survival of the Organization during the stresses and strains of that period.

Nowadays, of course, the veto is in disuse — and rightly so. It does, however, loom uncomfortably in the

background. We should like to see its use defined or circumscribed by clear principles and criteria. This is a decision, however, that only the permanent members themselves can make. We hope and expect, though, that the views and concerns of other Member States will receive due consideration.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on Agenda item 47 and have thus completed this stage of our consideration of that item.

Agenda item 25

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/438)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.16)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.16.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Practically since the very beginning of independence, in the nineteenth century, Latin America has demonstrated a clear desire for development of the institutions of the region. We can say, without exaggerating, that in many cases the region has been an active pioneer in the promotion of an important multilateral dynamic. This is rooted in the collective effort that led to independence, and, consequently, it reflects an amphictyonic ideal of solidarity which has evolved through our history and has adapted to various changes and new realities.

I am referring not just to the Panama Congress or to the Pan American Union, which predates the United Nations, or to the Organization of American States or various regional arrangements which cover almost all the areas of relations between States in modern times. I am referring specifically to the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and especially to "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", as draft resolution A/50/L.16 is entitled. By tradition, my delegation has the honour of introducing for the General Assembly's consideration the draft resolutions on this subject, on behalf of all members of SELA. We trust that this year's draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as has invariably happened in previous years in regard to similar draft resolutions.

I have indicated that the purpose of the draft resolution is to strengthen and extend the cooperation between the United Nations system and the Latin American Economic System. We believe that this could be a synergic link to deal with new as well as lingering problems affecting the region of Latin America and the Caribbean in the economic, financial and commercial fields, on which SELA works with great seriousness and enthusiasm.

I shall not refer to the enormous value of United Nations cooperation with the various regional arrangements at the present stage, but I should like to say that such understandings represent a trend that contributes to the creation of something which could be a most vigorous multilateral system in future.

Indeed, the dominant trends in the world economy reflected in the globalization of economic activities, as well as a growing interrelationship, go hand in hand with the consolidation of regional areas and spaces. This shows that it is imperative for the United Nations always to be in the vanguard of political as well as economic events. In this connection, the development of cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System could, in a way, be called a case-study or a test case.

For practical reasons, I shall not dwell unnecessarily on a description of the contents of the draft resolution, which delegations have before them. Actually, the text is similar to those of previous years, but it contains one important new element — one designed to ensure that this item will be considered biennially by the General Assembly, in line with United Nations efforts to rationalize its activities and to reduce costs.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Our colleague from Peru has given us an excellent introduction to draft resolution A/50/L.16, of which Panama is a sponsor and which we hope the General Assembly will adopt by consensus.

My delegation's statement on this item is in keeping with Panama's adherence to the goals of the Latin American Economic System (SELA). The Panama Convention establishing SELA was signed in my country's capital; ever since, we have considered it a regional creation, imbued with the spirit of Simón Bolívar and given a legitimate mandate to act for the attainment of its objectives so that its efforts and achievements can be counted among the successes of regional cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since its creation, SELA has brought together a generation of highly intelligent individuals firmly committed to the region. These individuals have shown vigilance in ensuring that SELA's machinery works according to a timetable that, in many essential activities, is in step with the timetables of the various mechanisms of the United Nations and its system.

We are pleased here to salute the new Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System, Mr. Carlos Moneta. His presence in SELA constitutes a validation of the assertion he made at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations:

"Latin America and the Caribbean firmly intend to reaffirm their identity and diversity in the emerging new international order... Globalization and regionalism do not, in any way, mean accepting without any discussion one homogenizing model, but, rather, exploring valid alternatives where, with our own cultural identity, we can incorporate the valuable experience of our members with those of other parts of the world." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, pp. 74-75*)

I am also very pleased to welcome Ambassador Allan Wagner, the new Permanent Observer of the Latin American Economic System to the United Nations. His excellent reputation in diplomacy and in the economic and social spheres is well known.

My delegation is also very pleased that Ambassador Oscar de Rojas, who served so splendidly as SELA's Permanent Observer, has stayed on at the United Nations, placing his talent and enthusiasm at the service of his country, Venezuela, and, thus, of this region.

Having read the Secretary-General's report in document A/50/438 on the agenda item under consideration, we see that it reflects SELA's efforts to maintain relations with the United Nations and various bodies of its system that contribute to productive partnership in the economic, social and communications fields.

My delegation wishes to make special mention of SELA's preparations for and activities at the World Summit for Social Development, held in March this year in Copenhagen. Mr. Moneta was quite right when he said that:

"As was reflected in the recent World Summit for Social Development, our countries must respond to a two-fold challenge to grow and modernize... and, at the same time, resolve the serious and potentially explosive social debt characterized by the considerable expansion of poverty and marginalization." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 74*)

SELA's very thoughtful work on that occasion led to concrete proposals. The soundness and relevance of these proposals must have an impact on the process of implementing in our region the Programme of Action adopted in Copenhagen.

In this regard, the current Permanent Secretary of SELA made the very pertinent assessment that, together with the adoption of effective measures of international cooperation aimed at fulfilling the commitments undertaken at the Social Summit:

"'An Agenda for Development' represents an exceptional opportunity for the United Nations again to play its central role in articulating a global vision of international economic relations and world development." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 75*)

In this connection, it is encouraging to note the position of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, as stated last July by Ambassador Salvador Arriola, who distinguished himself as Permanent Secretary of SELA during the preparations for the twenty-first meeting of the Latin American Council. He pointed out that SELA, today as in the past, continues to accord

"full validity to the objectives of the Panama Convention, which are consistent with the promotion of integration and regional cooperation and of a permanent system of consultation and coordination for the adoption of common positions and strategies on economic and social issues, both with international bodies and forums and with third countries and regional groupings".

My delegation wishes to make special reference to SELA's role in technical cooperation between developing countries. In playing this role, SELA deserves the gratitude of our Governments and encouragement from the United Nations. In this sphere of action, we attach special importance to measures aimed at intensifying the support

of the United Nations Development Programme for the programmes of the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System in order to complement technical-assistance activities.

In the view of the delegation of Panama, SELA can continue to play a most valuable role in technical and economic cooperation between developing countries. We know that the United Nations has the will to strengthen South-South cooperation, and we hope for that will to crystallize and, with SELA's participation, be meaningfully implemented. Here I wish to reaffirm Panama's existing commitment to SELA.

Mr. de Rojas (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Again this year, we support the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA), by which the General Assembly would urge the United Nations system to continue and intensify its support for and cooperation in the activities of the Latin American Economic System. In this connection, we echo the words spoken earlier by the representatives of Peru and Panama, whom we thank for their statements.

As seen from the report of the Secretary-General on this item (A/50/438), cooperation between the two organizations in recent years has been extremely productive and dynamic, not only covering the traditional international economic issues such as trade, finance, external debt and technology, but also expanding into new areas important for the development dialogue, such as social issues, the environment, modernization of methods of production, administration and management, and so forth.

For Latin America and the Caribbean, SELA is an increasingly important tool for regional cooperation and consultation on issues of interest on the international economic agenda for giving concrete, practical support to ongoing efforts to promote regional integration and to ensure that our region has its rightful place in the new framework of international economic relations. This is reflected in the recent decision taken at the Quito meeting of Heads of State of the Rio Group to ask SELA for technical support to back up a series of initiatives proposed by the Group. Many such activities, to be sure, will take place in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

For countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, SELA provides special coordination on many of the items

before the United Nations, as indicated by the fact that next January's regional preparatory meeting for the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will, as in the past, be held under the auspices of SELA. Moreover, in recent years, SELA has consolidated its institutional presence here in New York; I myself have had the honour to be involved in this. This will unquestionably help strengthen cooperation, especially between the two secretariats, and also between States members of the two organizations.

Thus, it is clear that improved cooperation and coordination between SELA and the United Nations system is not only desirable, but essential. Particularly important for SELA, in view of its meagre resources, is the ability to continue to benefit from the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the series of projects and activities it has carried out. We wish also to thank the UNDP, in particular its Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and its Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, for its assistance, and to echo paragraph 3 of the draft resolution we shall soon be adopting — by consensus I hope — in urging it to strengthen and expand its crucial support.

Mr. Sersale di Cerisano (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Argentina reiterates its support for cooperation between the United Nations system and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). We take this opportunity to welcome two new SELA officials: the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Carlos Moneta, and the Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Mr. Allan Wagner.

Argentina attaches great importance to regional mechanisms for consultation and policy coordination in active, dynamic multilateral economic diplomacy, to deal on an ongoing basis with items on the world agenda. We believe that the initial consultations on such items should always take place at the regional level; in that connection SELA is, and will continue to be, a priority forum for regional discussion and cooperation. This view is affirmed in paragraph 36 of the Declaration adopted by our Heads of State at the Ibero-American summit, held in October at Bariloche, Argentina.

We view regional policy consultation and coordination as a complement to international efforts. We countries that make use of this complementarity believe that each entity has its own advantages. In the case of SELA, it been most useful since its establishment not only as a regional complement to international efforts, but also to champion

new topics of benefit to the region as a whole. This is not merely theoretical: it has been manifested concretely in the Second Committee's work on economic and financial issues, where SELA has been consulted on a number of items and has been of great assistance to all countries of the region.

For all these reasons, and because of Argentina's history of cooperation with SELA, we urge the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.16, which includes a new request to the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a report on cooperation between the United Nations and SELA. I believe that this gives the Secretary-General enough time to carry out an in-depth review and to further strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the General Assembly on the fine way in which he is guiding the work of this body.

The report of the Secretary-General on the item before us (A/50/438) provides a good summary of the level and degree of cooperation between the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). International cooperation for development is a central commitment of the United Nations, particularly with respect to developing countries and their regional and subregional bodies — in this case the Latin American Economic System. Yet it is not an area of activity that is well known by world public opinion beyond the small circle of experts and governmental authorities.

I am referring to technical cooperation with the Latin American Economic System (SELA) but I could also refer to the reports that the General Assembly will see in the next few days regarding the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity and other bodies for regional cooperation and coordination.

Regrettably, there is an error of perception with regard to one of the essential obligations of the United Nations. A careful study of the report of the Secretary-General will reveal the extent to which the United Nations does indeed cooperate, through its programmes, agencies and organs, with the Latin American Economic System. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean certainly want such technical cooperation to be

increased and more intensified and would like to see the United Nations double or even triple its human and financial efforts in order to fulfil this obligation, which is inscribed in the Charter and in countless resolutions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies.

It is understandable that our brothers and sisters in other developing regions of the world, such as those of Africa and Asia, should express the same wish. And this is as it should be. This is an area of shared concerns in the developing world and is linked with the present international situation and the basic economic expectations of our countries. In a world that is swiftly becoming more and more interdependent and globalized, the international agenda has a stronger and stronger impact on the setting of the various national and regional agendas, which makes it increasingly necessary to have cooperation between the United Nations system and the various countries, and regional and subregional bodies of the developing world — both South-South cooperation and cooperation with the developed North. The countries of the so-called third world must demand such cooperation time and again, however many times it may be necessary, whether with regard to the Latin American Economic System or any of the other regional organizations of the developing world, for this is an essential obligation of the United Nations, and if we do not make ourselves heard, the United Nations could lose sight of its very *raison d'être*.

We are not here solely to confront the political crises of our times. We are here also to make international cooperation for development one of the essential pillars of the daily work of the United Nations in respect of North-South and South-South relations.

I wish to emphasize this aspect of United Nations efforts for cooperation in relation to SELA and other regional and subregional bodies dealing with cooperation between developing countries, but I also believe it appropriate to mention the essential importance of the Latin American System for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. If we do not reinforce our capacity for joint negotiation, providing the proper structures through our regional and subregional bodies of consultation and coordination, we will lose some genuine opportunities for negotiation between our countries and the developed North. This logic, which led to the creation of SELA through the signing of the Panama Convention in 1975 is still valid, and its importance is being felt more acutely because of the new international realities of the end of the century. This is true not only in our region but also in the regional organizations of Africa and Asia.

On behalf of my country, Costa Rica, I should like to express full support for the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and, as former Permanent Deputy Secretary of SELA and on behalf of the authorities that have requested me to do so, I should like to thank the entire Assembly for its support of the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.16 and of document A/50/438 and Corr.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System".

With draft resolutions of this kind and with the implementation of necessary, effective international cooperation programmes for development in Latin America and the Caribbean and developing regions of Asia and Africa, we shall be able to give real shape to the letter and the spirit of commitments enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Florencio (Brazil): Brazil attaches great importance to the role played by the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in contributing effectively to the work of the United Nations. This cooperation has not been limited to the elaboration of documents relevant to the debates within this Organization; beyond that, SELA's role has been instrumental in the informal articulation, coordination and exchange of views between representatives of our region on issues related to development.

Brazil is grateful for the role played by SELA in the debates on "An Agenda for Development" and other development-related issues. In this context, I wish to stress our full support for the draft resolution that has been submitted. I also wish to thank SELA's former representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Oscar de Rojas, and to welcome his successor, Mr. Allan Wagner.

The Acting President (interpretation from French): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.16.

I should like to inform the Assembly that at the last session of the General Assembly, the draft resolution under this agenda item was adopted without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.16?

Draft resolution A/50/L.16 was adopted (resolution 50/14).

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 25?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 15⁹

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Draft resolution (A/50/L.20)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.20.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): It gives me great pleasure to introduce the draft resolution on agenda item 150 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". It is contained in document A/50/L.20.

Recent developments in contemporary international relations have shown increased involvement of national parliaments, as an essential component of the state structure, in shaping relations between peoples as well as in enhancing international and bilateral relations between States. In point of fact, the role of national parliaments in international affairs is no longer limited to ratifying treaties or approving financial contributions to international organizations. This role has been widened in scope to include international cooperation through collective work carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), their world organization, which shares the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The fact that the membership of the IPU has increased to include 135 national parliaments is a clear reflection of its effective role in our contemporary world.

The diversity of IPU activities reveals the importance that its members attach to the subjects under consideration at the United Nations. The IPU has played a very positive and active role in supporting United Nations efforts in various parts of the world, in various conflicts and in the fields of disarmament, international humanitarian law, economic and social development, the environment and the advancement of women, as well as its important role in

enhancing democracy. All of this of course serves as vivid testimony to its long-standing history of support of the United Nations.

The Declaration entitled, "The Parliamentary Vision for International Cooperation into the 21st Century", was adopted by the special session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September this year to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This Declaration gives a global parliamentary overview on the major issues under consideration by the United Nations. In view of the importance of this document, my delegation, along with the delegation of Senegal, requested its distribution as an official document of the United Nations under several items, including the one now before us. It is now contained in document A/50/561 of October 1995.

In recognition of the further need to enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, the Executive Committee of the IPU has decided to seek a closer relationship with the United Nations by concluding an agreement on cooperation between the two organizations. This decision was unanimously approved by the Inter-Parliamentary Council, which is composed of all members of the IPU and presided over by Mr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, the Speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly, in his capacity as the current President of the IPU.

The Government of Senegal took the first step of requesting the inclusion of an additional item on this subject in the agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This request was endorsed by Governments of the members of the Executive Committee and other members of the IPU, which proposed a draft resolution on this agenda item.

Following extensive open-ended informal consultations, a revised draft resolution that enjoys general agreement was achieved. This draft resolution is sponsored by 55 Member States and appears in document A/50/L.20.

In the preambular part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly considers that the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union complement and support the work of the United Nations. The Assembly expresses its desire to strengthen existing cooperation between the two organizations in a new and adequate framework.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, the Assembly requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to conclude an agreement on cooperation between the two organizations which should make provision for consultations, appropriate representation and cooperation, in general as well as in specific fields, and to report to the General Assembly at its next session.

In view of the delicate balance reflected in this draft resolution, which was achieved, as I said to a moment ago, through intensive open-ended consultations, I have the pleasure to purpose, on behalf of the co-sponsors, that this draft resolution be adopted by the Assembly by consensus.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on Mrs. Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairperson of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament and Member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mrs. Heptulla (India): I stand here in support of the agenda item 150, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

Today, 107 years since the IPU was established, barely half a decade away from the dawn of the next millennium, and on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, it is important to appreciate that while major progress has been achieved in all fields many tasks continue to demand our urgent attention. More than 2 billion people of the world still live in abject poverty and are unemployed; hunger and malnutrition afflict all countries, though in varying proportions. Sustained economic growth is necessary to ensure the eradication of numerous ills in our planet. Trade is the oxygen of economies. But cross-border trade between transnational corporations constitutes one third of world trade and almost 15 per cent of the global gross national product (GNP). No developing country or group of countries can match this commercial strength, augmented by enormous financial flows that can make or break a country's financial structure.

The relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union dates back to very establishment of this world Organization, in which the IPU played a very major role. From the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the 94th IPU Conference at Bucharest earlier this year, we learned with deep anguish about the financial crisis of this Organization, at a time when it is increasingly being called upon to undertake difficult tasks. We hope that this crisis, resulting from a cash-flow problem, will soon be overcome.

The United Nations is an organization of Member States, giving voice, and a forum, to the intergovernmental process. IPU, on the other hand, represents the divergent will of the people of the world, as expressed through their representatives in the national parliaments, belonging both to the ruling party and to the opposition. A cooperative relationship between the IPU and the United Nations has to be formalized so that the intergovernmental process can benefit from the experience of the elected representatives of the people.

I am happy to announce that the Government of India, having been convinced by the Indian Parliamentary Group, has cosponsored in the United Nations a draft resolution for this purpose, which the Assembly is now considering. It is my delegation's conviction that such a cooperative relationship would be truly reflective of the constant support of the Inter Parliamentary Union for all the programmes and activities of the United Nations. Bringing new ideas and firm support to the ideals and precepts of democracy, such a relationship would also contribute to the democratization, restructuring, revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations itself.

Among the tasks before the United Nations and the IPU today are the regulation of the international economy, transformed by the global movement of trade, capital and labour; the opening up of political systems, with democracy being the norm in national governance; the combating of the scourges of narcotics, arms trafficking, crime and terrorism, which seem to have replaced the scourges of war; the alarming population growth; the glaring disparity between men and women; environmental degradation; and peace and disarmament.

Since its inception half a century ago, the United Nations has been undertaking the task of establishing world peace by promoting disarmament. It has been seeking to establish economic parity, the fair distribution of resources and the capacity to harness natural resources through its specialized agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It has been seeking also to usher in a healthy generation through the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as attempting to combat, through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the unchecked growth of population.

The United Nations has consistently addressed the issue of the empowerment of women. From two decades ago, in Mexico, to this year, in Beijing, it has called upon the nations of the world to give neglected and

exploited half of humanity the status of equal partner in all walks of life. Conscious of the necessity of protecting the environment of the planet, the United Nations has been fervently taking up the cause of environmental protection.

We at the IPU have always supported these steps. We have recognized the responsibility of parliaments in solving global issues. Under several of its agenda items, the IPU in successive years has taken up problems relating to disarmament, global peace, social development, environment, population control and, above all, the parity between men and women. In fact, the IPU supporting the call of the United Nations, in the past five years, organized four specialized conferences: on the environment, in Brazil; on population, in Cairo; on social development, in Copenhagen; and on women, in Beijing. Delhi, in February 1997, will host the IPU conference on the parity between men and women in decision-making, as a follow-up to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, concluded at Beijing.

The United Nations is the representative body of the executive wing of the Governments of the States of the world. The IPU is the representative body of the legislative wing of the States of the world. Just as in any successful State both the executive wing and the legislative wing have to work in close cooperation, at the international level also there should be close cooperation between these executive and legislative bodies, the United Nations and the IPU. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, through the parliamentarians, can play a major role in disseminating to the grass-roots level awareness of the activities and achievements of the United Nations. It is, then from the grass-roots level that the United Nations could draw its strength and inspiration, and take the lead in the process of development through the participation of peoples — so emphatically highlighted in successive Human Development Reports.

The IPU meets twice a year and discusses global issues, which, by their very nature, are also the issues before the United Nations. Working in close cooperation with the IPU and giving it intergovernmental status can fulfil the vision of a global democracy that the United Nations has always espoused and nurtured.

In my capacity as a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I have always stressed the essential similarity in approach, the convergence of actions and, most important, the perfect congruence of the objectives of the IPU and the United Nations. What more can be said for a gainful collaborative relationship between the two? I am convinced that it befalls us as representatives of our parliaments and our people in

the IPU, and as representatives of our Governments and nations in this Assembly, to commence today a process that would culminate in the construction of a new society based on justice and fair play, on equity and compassion, and on equality and dignity for all. We owe it not only to ourselves but to coming generations to be successful in this task. Let us therefore join hands in this noble endeavour.

I seek the Assembly's indulgence in supporting this agenda item.

Programme of work

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly.

I wish to inform members that sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 16, dealing, respectively, with the election of twenty-nine members of the Governing Council, of the United Nations Environment Programme and twelve members of the World Food Council as well as sub-item (f) of agenda item 17, concerning the appointment of seven members of the Committee on Conferences, will be taken up on Tuesday, 21 November, in the morning. That same morning, as already announced, the Assembly will also consider agenda item 152, "Review of the role of the Trusteeship Council", and agenda item 38, "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

I should also like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 20, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance".

I have been requested by Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa of Austria, who is Coordinator of the informal consultations on draft resolutions on agenda item 20, to inform delegations intending to submit draft resolutions under this item to do so by the target date of Friday, 24 November. However, may I add that it would be useful to submit draft resolutions as soon as possible to allow time for further negotiations, with a view to reaching consensus on the draft resolutions.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.